



# Renew Our Waters

*Every choice counts.*

## CARPET CLEANING

To keep our waters clean, keep your dirty water out.

Nothing feels better than walking across clean carpet, except maybe wading through clean water on a warm summer day. Unfortunately, far too often dirty wash water from carpet cleaning is dumped down the driveway and finds its way through the storm drain system to our local waters. Disposing of these materials into storm drains causes serious ecological problems and is PROHIBITED by law. By following the tips on this sheet, you can clean your home and keep our local waters clean too.

### DISPOSE OF WASTEWATER PROPERLY

Wash water from carpet, drapery or upholstery cleaning must be discharged to a sink, toilet or other drain connected to the sanitary sewer system. Never discharge

to a street, gutter, parking lot, ditch or storm drain. This applies even when you use cleaning products labeled “nontoxic” or “biodegradable.” Using biodegradable soap does not lessen its immediate environmental impact - it simply means that the soap will degrade in time.

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### FILTER WASTEWATER

Before dumping your dirty water into the sanitary sewer, filter the water to make sure that any fiber or debris does not go down the drain. Debris in the wash water can clog the pipes. Dispose of the filtered material in the garbage, provided that the carpet was not contaminated with hazardous materials.

### HIRING A PROFESSIONAL CLEANER

Check with the carpet cleaner you hire to ensure the used wash water is emptied into a utility sink or other indoor sanitary sewer connection. Just like you, professional cleaners should never dispose of dirty water in a street, gutter, parking lot, ditch or storm drain.

If you contract with a carpet cleaner regularly, arrange an appropriate location for the contractor to discharge wash water such as a utility sink, toilet or sewer outlet.

Stormwater is rain or snowmelt and water from things people do, like washing the car or watering the lawn. As water makes its way to the storm drain it picks up pollutants like oil from car leaks and bacteria from pet waste. When we choose products carefully and dispose of products properly, we can greatly reduce the amount of pollution that enters our local waters through runoff.

Untreated runoff is the biggest threat to our nation’s water quality, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Let’s make the small, important changes that will reduce that threat and improve water quality and our lives!

## Realize

What touches the ground enters the water



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## GOOD DOG, GOOD OWNER

You can be a responsible pet owner and protect our waters.

Your dog brings a lot of joy to your life. Enjoying your four legged friend doesn't need to come at the price of clean water. We can have both. But to make it happen, we all need to think a little differently.

### MORE TO WASTE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Pet waste is not only an unpleasant find on a yard or sidewalk, it carries bacteria that causes beach closings in the summer.

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Campylobacteriosis and salmonellosis are often the cause of the "24-hour bug". They're transferred through fecal material from an infected person or animal.

Toxoplasmosis is carried by a single-cell parasite that lives in infected animal feces (typically cats). In pregnant women, it can pass through the umbilical cord to the unborn fetus, causing serious abnormalities.

### WASTE DISPOSAL

Prevent bacteria in our streams by carrying small plastic bags when walking your dog. Collect droppings, tie a knot in the bag, and dispose of it properly. Do not throw pet waste down the sewer.

At home, pick up pet waste often. Even waste in your backyard can pollute local waterways. You can flush the waste down the toilet, put it in your trash can (be sure to check your local ordinances first!) or bury it in your yard.

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## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

### Cleaning out the garage and keeping our waters clean

We all have the opportunity - and the responsibility - to dispose of waste materials properly. The rule of thumb is: If you wouldn't dump it in the river, don't let it touch parking lots, soil, or any other place where it can be washed into a stream or storm drain. Post this sheet in your garage storage area as a reminder. This will help us change one habit at a time, so we have good fishing, swimming, paddling and waterskiing when the work is done.

#### HARMFUL SUBSTANCES

Certain household chemicals, when not used up properly, become household hazardous waste. These products can contain the same chemicals as strictly regulated industrial wastes. These products include: cleaning products and wash water, food oils and grease, automotive oil, grease and waste fluids, paint, petroleum-based solvents, rodent baits, batteries, herbicides, pesticides, concrete wash water and sidewalk salt.

**If you wouldn't dump it in the river, don't let it touch parking lots, soil or any other place where it can be washed into a stream or storm drain.**

#### HANDLE WITH CARE

To avoid the potential risks associated with household wastes, always monitor the use, storage and disposal of products with potentially hazardous substances.

#### PROPER DISPOSAL

All of the counties in Northeast Wisconsin have Household Hazardous Waste drop off programs or collection days. Contact your local environmental, health or solid waste agency for instructions on proper use and disposal.

#### USING LESS

The quantity of waste from a single household may be small, but that quantity adds up fast considering the number of households in Northeast Wisconsin. Consider reducing your purchase of products that contain hazardous ingredients.

Stormwater is rain or snowmelt and water from things people do, like overwatering the lawn. As water makes its way to the storm drain it picks up pollutants like oil from car leaks and improperly disposed of waste. When we choose products carefully and dispose of products properly, we can reduce the amount of pollution that enters our local waterways through runoff.

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## ICE AND SNOW CONTROL

**We can have safe walkways in the winter and cleaner water all year round.**

Winter in Northeast Wisconsin is a great time for outdoor fun, like ice fishing, ice skating, sledding and skiing. Here, winter also means mountains of snow to shovel and layers of ice to remove from driveways and sidewalks.

We often try to make ice removal easier by using products like salt and sand to melt the snow and ice. Many people do not realize that these products are harming local waters and the animals that rely on them. When the ice and snow melt, the salt and chemicals flow into street drains that lead directly to rivers and lakes.

### SHOVEL OFTEN AND EARLY

Shoveling often during and immediately following the storm removes the snow from walkways and driveways before it gets packed down by tires and feet. The most important part of deicing is removing as much snow as possible before applying salt or sand - it's also great exercise!

**Use only the recommended amount. Throwing down more salt will not speed up the melting process.**

### MAKE THE MOST OF THE SALT YOU USE

It is not always necessary to see bare pavement to have a safe winter surface. Ask yourself if it is necessary that the snow or ice be removed. For salt to be effective, air temperature needs to be warmer than the surface temperature of the area you want to treat. A little goes a long way. Use only the recommended amount. Throwing

down more salt will not speed up the melting process. Use only enough deicer to break the bond between the ice and the pavement, then remove the remaining slush by shoveling.

### LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF SAND YOU USE

Sand provides traction. It does not melt ice. Sand, although not chemical, contributes to polluting our local waters. It adds to the excess sediment that is entering waterways, eliminating important habitat for aquatic plants and animals. Sand does play a role in winter road management. It is often used by municipalities on roads to help maintain traction. Since ice removal is typically the concern of homeowners, sand may not be necessary.

Stormwater is rain or snowmelt and water from things people do, like overwatering the lawn or washing the car on the driveway. This water runs off our properties, into the street and down the storm drain - picking up pollutants on its way. Once it reaches the storm drain the water and the pollutants it carries is discharged into local waterways.

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## KIDS CAN HELP TOO!

There are lots of things kids can do to help keep our rivers and lakes clean.

Have you ever thought about where rain goes after it lands on your house or driveway? Rain drops roll down your driveway and into the road. Once in the road, rain enters the storm drain - the grates that are in city streets.

Do you know what happens to things that enter the storm drain? Water or any thing else that enters those drains travel through pipes that empty right into our rivers and lakes!

You can help clean up our local rivers and lakes by making sure that only rain goes down the storm drain.

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### CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR PET!

Pet waste is not only gross to find in yards or on sidewalks, it carries bacteria and germs that cause beach closings in the summer. To keep our waters clean, pick up after your pet often. Even waste in your backyard can pollute local waters. Bring a small plastic bag with you on walks and pick up after your dog.

### HELP WITH THE YARD

Grass clippings and leaves from our yards are causing our lakes and rivers to turn green! You can help by sweeping grass clippings off your driveway and sidewalk back onto your lawn after your mom or dad mows the grass. You can also help your dad and mom rake up the leaves in your yard in the fall!

### GET SOME EXERCISE

You may have heard that cars and trucks can cause air pollution but did you know that driving cars and trucks can also affect water? Oil, grease and dirt that fall from our vehicles when we are driving are washed into storm drains and into our rivers and lakes. One way to help clean up water is to drive less. Instead of asking for a ride, ask your mom or dad if you can walk or bike with them to a friend's house or the park!

Most importantly, never put anything down the storm drain. The fish and frogs and especially your friends don't like to swim with garbage!  
Only rain should go into the drain!

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## LEAVE YOUR LEAVES ON LAND

Fall leaves provide beautiful color on trees, but in local waters they contribute to algal blooms. Leaves are a leading contributor of phosphorus in our waters.

Properly cleaning up your yard in the fall will help keep our local waters clean too! Read these tips. Post this sheet in your garage near your rakes. Working together to keep leaves out of the storm drain and out of local waters will help keep green on the land and out of the water.

### KEEP YOUR LEAVES ON YOUR PROPERTY

A great way to make sure leaves do not end up in local waters is to keep them on your property!

Mulch leaves in place by making several passes over the leaves with a mulching mower. This will keep leaves on your lawn and provide it with nutrients it needs for healthy grass next spring.

Collect mulched leaves and spread them in garden beds or under shrubs. Leaves provide valuable protection for plants through the winter and also provide nutrients for spring growth.

**Composting is recycling your lawn trimmings and turning them into a valuable resource for your garden or houseplants!**

### COMPOSTING

Composting is recycling your lawn trimmings and turning them into a rich soil, known as compost - a valuable resource for your garden or houseplants.

**Cold composting** requires little

maintenance but can take up to 2 years to complete. To create a cold compost pile, mix non-woody yard wastes and let them sit.

**Hot composting** requires regular maintenance such as turning and watering, but can create compost in typically 1-3 months time. To create a hot compost pile, mix equal amounts of high nitrogen "greens" (wet and soft materials such as grass clippings) and high-carbon "browns" (dry and woody materials such as dead leaves) with 10% bulky materials such as wood chips. The mix should remain moist but not wet and should be turned often.

**More information on Composting can be found on the internet.**

### RAKING & COLLECTION

If you decide to collect your leaves for removal from your yard, follow your community leaf collection policies and schedules. Put a tarp over leaf piles between pick-up times to prevent them from blowing away. Remove leaves and debris from the gutters and storm sewer inlets.

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**Northeast Wisconsin Stormwater Consortium**

P.O. Box 1861 Appleton, WI 54912 | 920.915-5767

Renewourwaters.org



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## FISH DON'T SWIM IN CHLORINE

Following a few simple steps will prepare your pool water for entering local waterways.

Taking the time to follow the proper procedures when discharging water from your pool or spa will help keep our local waters a healthy place for fish and other aquatic life.

### DECHLORINATE THE WATER

Water from swimming pools and spas must be dechlorinated prior to discharging water. Let the water in the pool or spa sit for at least one week to reduce the chlorine or bromine level until it is undetectable and water temperature is at air temperature. Measure the pH. It should fall within a range of 6.5 - 8.5 prior to discharge.

### DISCHARGE WATER TO GRASS OR LANDSCAPING

Discharging pool and spa water onto grass or landscaping will allow water to soak into the earth, where the water will be naturally cleansed prior to entering local waterways.

If irrigation on site is not possible, water may be discharged off your property - provided it is directed through a grassed surface prior to entering a curblin gutter or a paved street.

Do not fertilize prior to discharging pool water.

Discharging water onto grass or landscaping will allow water to soak into the earth.

### MONITOR THE DISCHARGE

Do not let water discharge onto your neighbor's property. Monitor water as it is discharging to ensure it does not cause erosion or flooding. Discharge the water in a manner that will prevent nuisance conditions (such as creation of odors and fly and mosquito breeding conditions) due to ponding of water for a prolonged period.

### PROTECT LOCAL WATERWAYS

If a pool or spa has been acid washed, the water may not be discharged off the pool/spa owner's property. Water from back

flushing pool filters should only be discharged to the sanitary sewer (down a sink or toilet) or on-site septic tank system where it will be treated prior to entering local waters.

Remember it is illegal in all communities to discharge pollutants, including chlorinated pool water, into a storm drain. As a pool or spa owner, you are responsible for following your municipality's ordinance for pool and spa discharge. Contact your municipality for regulations.

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## RAIN BARRELS

**Catching rain when it falls offers benefits you *and* our local waters!**

The Fox Valley area receives an average of 22.23 inches of rain from April through October. Rain runs off your rooftop, onto your driveway, down the street and into the storm drain collecting dirt, debris, fertilizer and other harmful substances along the way. All of the polluted water ends up in our local waters UNLESS we stop the water where it falls!

### CATCHING THE WATER WHERE IT FALLS

A rain barrel is a system that collects rainwater from your roof that would otherwise be lost to runoff. Rain barrels come in a wide variety of materials, designs and colors. Rain barrels can be purchased at local hardware stores or can be built at a rain barrel workshop.

**Catching rain water in a barrel allows you to water your garden and plants indoors and out during dry periods.**

### CHOOSING & PLACING A BARREL

Rain barrels come in a wide variety of materials, designs and colors. Ready-to-use barrels are available at most hardware stores and garden centers. Alternatively, you can save money by making your own barrel. For more information on making your own barrel visit our website.

A rain barrel must be secured on a firm level surface. Water is heavy - a 55 gallon barrel weighs approximately 460 lbs, and tipping is a risk it is unsecured or on uneven ground. Building your own rain barrel? There are different kits offering downspout diverters that attach to the barrel (without having to cut your downspout) and systems for linking barrels to accommodate overflow.

### BENEFITS OF A RAIN BARREL

Rain water is best for plants. Catching rain water in a rain barrel allows you to water your garden and plants in doors and out during dry periods. Instead of paying for water from the tap, you can use the water you collect to keep your landscape healthy - saving you money!

Using a rain barrel not only benefits you but also our local waters. Water stored in a rain barrel and used for watering plants won't rush off your property and carry pollutants to our streams and rivers. Not only that, water that is used for watering sinks into the ground and replenishes the ground water supply. Two great benefits from one barrel!

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## VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

Get where you need to go and minimize the impact on local waters.

We don't think much of jumping in the car and running to the store. You may have heard that air quality is affected by vehicle emissions but have you realized that our quick trips affect our area waters? Read these tips. Help us change one habit at a time so that we can enjoy good fishing, swimming, paddling and waterskiing when our running about is done.

### WASHING

When you wash a car in a driveway or street, wash water flows into the storm sewer system and directly to local rivers - along with dirt, emissions and detergent.

**When you're tempted to put off repairs or the six-month maintenance check, think again. When your car performs better, our waters fare better, too.**

You can avoid this by using a commercial car wash, where systems direct wash water to the local wastewater treatment facility and oil, grease, detergent, sand, and grime are removed.

If you must wash your car at home, use biodegradable soap, wash it on your lawn

or on other unpaved areas to keep runoff out of storm sewers or ditches, and dispose of leftover washwater in the toilet or sink.

### MAINTENANCE

From time to time, we've all noticed an oily sheen on water in streets and parking lots. It's the result of small leaks, accumulated residues, and fuel overfills from our cars. When a vehicle is maintained, fewer leaks spill onto streets and highways and fewer contaminants enter our streams.

So when you're tempted to put off repairs or the six-month maintenance check, think again. When your car performs better, our waters fare better, too.

### MINDFUL DRIVING

We all know air quality is affected by vehicle emissions. But did you know emissions can also affect water quality? Tiny particles emitted from tail pipes settle on roadways, wash into storm sewer systems, then flow into rivers and streams. Their impact may seem small, but when you consider all the vehicles traveling on our roads, the impact is clear.

Street sweeping can minimize the impact of this pollution but rain and melting snow still carry contaminants to storm sewers. One way we can reduce this pollution is to drive less. Plan trips so you accomplish several things at once. Use public transportation. Even better, walk or ride your bike.

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